



Literacy Links

October, 2006
Volume 3, Number 2

Monthly E-Newsletter of Maine Reading First



Upcoming Events

October 20~
"Strategies for Active Reading and Thinking" presented by Stephanie Harvey, Jeff's Catering, Brewer; Sponsored by the University of Maine College of Education and Human Development—Literacy Unit; Contact Theresa McMannus at 581-2441 for registration information

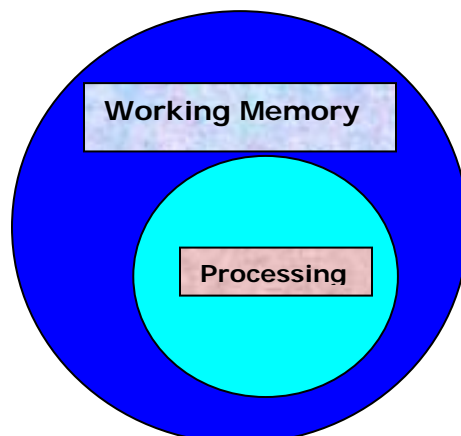
Spotlight on...

Automaticity

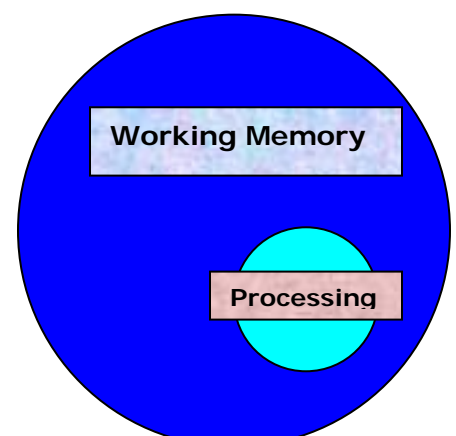
Automaticity refers to any behavior that can be performed easily with little attention, effort, or conscious awareness. Adults perform many tasks automatically every day such as eating, driving, or keyboarding. The ability to perform some tasks automatically without conscious attention allows adults to direct attention to other tasks which require more mental energy or working memory. The amount of working memory people have is finite. When a majority of working memory is consumed with processing a task, there is a limited amount of working memory available to focus on another task. Automaticity also plays a critical role in reading as proposed by Laberge and Samuels (1974) in their classic article "Theory of Automatic Information Processing".

The two primary processes readers face are decoding and comprehending. Since comprehending requires higher-level processing, decoding is the skill which needs to become automatic. Comprehending is compromised when readers are unable to identify words automatically. The more attention or processing readers must give to identifying words, the less working memory they have left to focus on comprehending what they read. Below, the diagram on the left illustrates how working memory can be consumed when readers cannot identify words automatically. The inner circle in the diagram represents the amount of processing capacity required by a student who cannot identify words automatically. The diagram on the right represents a fluent reader. Because fluent readers are able to identify words accurately and automatically, they can focus most of their attention (or working memory) on comprehension.

Dysfluent Reader



Fluent Reader



October 28~

"What it Means for a Child to Learn How to Look at Print" presented by Blair Koefoed, Kennebec Valley Community College, Fairfield; Sponsored by the University of Maine College of Education and Human Development—Literacy Unit; Contact Theresa McMannus at 581-2441 for registration information

Save the date!

Those of you who attended the Maine Reading First Summer Institute in June may be excited to hear that Jo Robinson will be returning to Maine on May 30-June 1, 2007. More specific details about her time in Maine will be included in the November edition of *Literacy Links*.

Looking Ahead to Next Year

September 27-28, 2007~

The New England Reading Association (NERA) Annual Conference will be coming back to Maine next year! The 2007 Annual

Automaticity in reading should occur at two levels:

1. **Word Level**~quick and effortless recognition of words

It is recommended that most students need 4-14 exposures of a new word in order to recognize it automatically. Students who struggle with reading, however, may need up to 40 exposures of a new word.

2. **Text Level**~fluid rate of reading connected text

When readers read automatically at the text level, they can focus on the ideas and relationship among ideas within the text. Otherwise, they are word calling.

Instruction should attend to building automaticity at both the word and text levels. It is important that teachers maintain an instructional focus on meaning while attending to the need for automaticity to prevent students from receiving a distorted message that speed is all that is important for proficient reading.

Description of Instructional Idea...

Irresistible Idioms

Idioms are a unique form of expression where the meaning of the expression cannot be derived from the individual words. Examples of idioms include:

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| It's raining cats and dogs | Play it by ear |
| Hold your horses | Shake a leg |
| He had me in stitches | Give someone the cold shoulder |
| Eyes bigger than your stomach | Under the weather |
| That's for the birds | Knock someone's socks off |
| Cat got your tongue? | Straw that broke the camel's back |

Students can be introduced to idioms by sharing examples and asking which idioms they have heard from family, friends, or the media. Students are fascinated by considering the literal interpretation of idioms and enjoy learning the actual meaning of the phrase. Idioms can be tricky when readers encounter them in texts so it is necessary to teach students the definition of idioms and how to interpret them when they are encountered in texts. There are many picture books which focus entirely on idioms:

- My Momma Likes to Say by Denise Brennan-Nelson
- My Teacher Likes to Say by Denise Brennan-Nelson
- In a Pickle and Other Funny Idioms by Marvin Terban

Guided practice opportunities for students learning about irresistible idioms include:

- searching for idioms in daily conversations or within texts and recording those found on chart paper
- illustrating the literal interpretation of the idiom (i.e. Cats and dogs drawn below large, black rain clouds for "It's raining cats and dogs.")
- tallying which idioms are more popular and widely used

Summary of Professional Literacy Text...

The Struggling Reader:

Interventions that Work

This timely resource answers questions many educators have regarding how to design and deliver instruction which best matches the specific needs of struggling readers. The authors purposefully begin this text with a description of "A Prevention-Intervention Framework" which includes the following cycle of steps:

1. assessments used to diagnose specific strengths and needs of

Conference will be held at the Augusta Civic Center.



"To learn to read is to light a fire; every syllable that is spelled out is a spark."
Victor Hugo



"Reading is a means of thinking with another

students

2. explicit instruction targeted to students needs (includes both teaching and reteaching)
3. opportunities for students to practice newly learned strategies, skills, or processes
4. opportunities for students to independently apply newly learned strategies, skills, or processes
5. administering assessments again to determine progress and consequently continue or modify instruction

The remainder of the text describes procedures and sample lesson ideas for focusing instruction on oral language, phonemic awareness, word recognition, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and writing. All of the ideas are grounded in the prevention-intervention framework.

The Struggling Reader: Interventions that Work by J. David Cooper, David Chard, and Nancy Kiger was published in 2006 by Scholastic, Inc. under the "Theory and Practice Series". The ISBN is 043961659X.

Children's Literature Title...

AlphaOops! The Day Z Went First

Written by Alethea Kontis and illustrated by Bob Kolar

Ever wonder why the alphabet is arranged the way it is or what would happen if the letters were suddenly rearranged? Read this book to discover the absolute chaos that occurs when Z decides it has had enough of being the last letter of the alphabet for such a long time. When Z requests the order of the alphabet to be reversed, it seems like a simple task. Unfortunately, Z's letter friends have a difficult time trying to arrange themselves in the reverse order. Readers will chuckle as the personalities of the letters are revealed in this unique alphabet book. AlphaOops! The Day Z Went First was published in 2006 by Candlewick Press and the ISBN is 0763627283.

News from Maine Reading First...

- The Maine Department of Education will not be holding a Maine Reading First subgrant competition this school year. Questions related to this can be directed to Patrick O'Shea at Patrick.O'Shea@maine.gov or Lee Anne Larsen at LeeAnn.Larsen@maine.gov
- The Center on Education Policy issued a report on Reading First on September 20. The report is titled "Keeping Watch on Reading First" and is available at <http://www.cep-dc.org/pubs/readingfirst> A news release pertaining to this report is also available at this website.

Check it out...

- In 2002, International Reading Association, National Council of Teachers of English, and Verizon Foundation collaborated to develop read•write•think as a free, Internet-based collection of resources and ideas for English Language Arts. The website address is <http://www.readwritethink.org> and four main categories of resources can be selected from the home page:

1. **Lessons**~Hundreds of detailed lesson plans are available. The plans can be selected by grade-level span (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, or 9-12), instructional technique (reading, writing, drama, etc.), and content focus (comprehension, genre study, vocabulary, etc.).

*person's mind; it forces
you to stretch your
own."*
Charles Scribner Jr.



2. **Standards**~The standards for English Language Arts created by International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English are included.
3. **Web Resources**~Hundreds of Web resources are available with a description and a website address. Web resources are available on the following topics: instructional resources, professional development, reference library, and student resources.
4. **Student Materials**~Several online, interactive student activities are available.

Newsletter Archives

There are several earlier editions of *Literacy Links* available at
<http://www.maine.gov/education/rf/homepage.htm>

| Edition | Spotlight Topic |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| March, 2005 | Maine Reading First |
| April, 2005 | Maine Reading First Course |
| May, 2005 | Reading Fluency |
| June, 2005 | Vocabulary |
| September, 2005 | Phonemic Awareness |
| October, 2005 | Phonics |
| November, 2005 | Comprehension |
| December, 2005/January, 2006 | DIBELS |
| February, 2006 | Literacy Centers |
| March, 2006 | Interactive Read Aloud |
| April, 2006 | Nonfiction |
| May, 2006 | Word Walls |
| June, 2006 | Classroom Design |
| September, 2006 | Shared Reading |



For additional information about any of the items in this newsletter or to sign up to receive this e-newsletter, please email janet.trembly@maine.gov

Click here to view the Maine Reading First website
<http://www.maine.gov/education/rf/homepage.htm>

The professional development opportunities and materials are listed in *Literacy Links* for informational purposes only and are not necessarily endorsed by the Maine Department of Education's Maine Reading First Initiative.